ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 5 Fourteenth Year February 7, 1947

INDIA

Final Step Towards Church Union

The General Council of the (Anglican) Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, meeting in Madras on January 22, 1947, agreed to accept the interpretation given by the Joint Committee of the three Churches negotiating union to that section of the scheme of union known as the "Pledge". The Pledge bound the authorities of the United Church in the event of union taking place to respect the traditions and convictions of the separate Churches from which it had been formed. The interpretation given by the Joint Committee would make it possible in certain circumstances within the United Church for a non-episcopally ordained clergyman to be appointed to an ex-Anglican congregation (see I.C.P.I.S. No. 37, 1946).

The acceptance of this by a majority of the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (bishops 7 to 6, clergy 30 to 22, laity 33 to 7) removes the last obstacle to union and the Joint Committee is proceeding quickly with its plans for the inauguration of the new Church. Candidates for the Episcopate will be nominated by March 1st, episcopal appointments will be announced on April 15, and the United Church will be set up at the end of September 1947. It will be known as "The Church of South India", will comprise a Christian community of about 1,200,000 and will be divided into 16 dioceses. The Churches forming the union are the four Anglican dioceses of Madras, Travancore, Tinevelly and Dornakal, the South India Provincial Synod of the Methodist Church and the South India United Church (which is itself a union of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches formed in 1908).

E.P.S.Geneva

Joint Executive Committee of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission

On January 30 and 31, 1947 the Joint Executive Committee of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission met in Geneva, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Henry Carter (Great Britain). The obligations of the Churches to refugees of various national groups were discussed. The position of Displaced Persons demands special attention, in view of the withdrawal of UNRRA from work in Europe.

The very difficult position of the German-speaking refugees from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was reviewed. The Commission will help the Churches and Church relief organisations in the countries concerned towards a humane solution of the problem. The first church delegates appointed for work in Germany and Austria are now engaged in the service of Displaced Persons and refugees.

Of particular interest was the report on the activity of the London Office of the Refugee Commission, which is forwarding material supplies to the Protestant

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INDIA

First Step Towards Church Union

The General Council of the (Anglican) Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, meeting in Madras on January 22, 1947, agreed to accept the interpretation given by the Joint Committee of the three Churches regarding the United Church of South India of union known as the "Pledge". The Pledge is not a constitution or form of Church in the event of union taking place to respect the traditions and worship of the separate Churches from which it has been formed. This interpretation by the Joint Committee would make it possible in certain circumstances for the United Church to use a non-episcopally ordained clergyman to be appointed to an Anglican congregation (see I.O.P.I.S. No. 27, 1946).

The acceptance of this by a majority of the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (Minutes 7 to 1, January 20 to 22, Item 22 to 31 inclusive) has cleared the obstacle by which and the joint committee is proceeding quickly with the plans for the inauguration of the new Church. Candidates for the ministries will be nominated by French lot, episcopal consecrations will be arranged on April 15, and the United Church will be set up on 1st and 2nd September 1947. It will be known as "The Church of South India", will comprise a Christian community of about 1,500,000 and will be divided into 14 dioceses. The Christian Church in this union are the Anglican dioceses of Madras, Travancore, Tinnevelly and Dornakal, the South India Provincial Synod of the Methodist Church and the South India Church Union. Thus it will be a union of Episcopalian and Congregational Churches formed in 1908.

Joint Executive Committee of the European Refugee Commission

On January 30 and 31, 1947 the Joint Executive Committee of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission met in Geneva, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Hugh Gough (Great Britain). The obligations of the Churches to refugees of various nationalities were discussed. The position of displaced persons through special arrangements in view of the withdrawal of UNRRA from work in Europe.

The very difficult position of the German-speaking refugees from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe was reviewed. The Commission will help the Churches and Church relief organizations in the countries concerned towards a lasting solution of the problem. The first-hand delegates appointed for work in Germany and Austria are now engaged in the service of displaced persons and refugees.

Of particular interest was the report on the mobility of the Inter-Zone Office of the Refugee Commission, which is forwarding material supplies on the Soviet-Zone

organisation in Austria. Thirty-five thousand food-parcels, containing food which English people have saved out of their own rations are on their way to Germany and Austria. This work is in close contact with the "save Europe Now" movement organized by Victor Gollancz. In cooperation with the "National Children's Home and Orphanage" and with the consent of the British Home Office, the Rev. Henry Carter has made preparations to invite 100 selected children from Austria and Germany. They are to stay in England for education for a period of five or six years.

The London Office of the Refugee Commission is also giving consideration to the spiritual welfare of Poles in Great Britain who are associated with the Polish Protestant Church.

The discussions of the Joint Committee also related to the preparation of the plenary session of the Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches, which is to be held in Copenhagen in March 1947. E.P.S.Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN — Church Leaders Advise Government on Policy in Germany

A delegation of British churchmen to the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches in the British Zone of Germany (see I.C.P.I.S. No. 41, 1946) has issued its report to the Control Office for Germany and Austria, entitled "The Task of the Churches in Germany". The delegation was composed of representatives of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Scotland, the English Free Churches and the Youth Work of the British Council of Churches. Its chairman was the Bishop of Chichester.

The delegation regard "the problem of physical survival" through the winter and after as "so acute that the delegation urgently ask that everything possible be done by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, the U.S.S.R., Canada and other countries, that at least the minimum ration needed for mere subsistence be made available for the German people, on a systematic and reliable long-term plan".

The report stresses the terrible housing conditions, "the bitterness" caused by the methods of denazification, and urges strongly that "while persons charged with crimes should be tried in a court and punished on concivtion, and high ranking Nazi leaders and supporters should be removed from their posts, all other persons should be granted an amnesty". It further urges "the release of all prisoners of war, including those in the Middle East, by the end of 1947".

A large part of the report is taken up with the situation of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. It notes the criticism by the German Church leaders of a lack of co-operation between the Control Commission and the Churches, and an inadequate regard for Catholic and Evangelical needs in education, youth work, and supply of paper for printing. It urges a high priority for youth work and that full opportunity be given for the Churches to play their part in this respect. On the subject of religious instruction it notes that in Berlin the position was stated "to be worse than under Hitler".

There are summarised some of the principal recommendations of the report:

"That in view of the indispensable part which it plays in the discharge of British responsibilities in Germany, the Religious Affairs Branch should receive increased status and authority.

"That the Religious Affairs Branch be requested to see whether adequate facilities for public worship exist in the different regions... and to make urgent

organisation in Austria. Thirty-five thousand food-parcels, containing food which English people have saved out of their own rations, are on their way to Germany and Austria. This work is in close contact with the "Save Europe Now" movement organised by Victor Gollancz. In connection with the "National Children's Home and Orphanage" and with the consent of the British Zone Office, the Rev. Henry Carter has made preparations to invite 100 selected children from Austria and Germany. They are to stay in England for education for a period of five or six years.

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A delegation of British churchmen to the German Catholic and Protestant Churches in the British Zone of Germany (see I.O.P.I.S. No. 42, 1946) has issued its report to the Control Office for Germany and Austria, entitled "The Task of the Churches in Germany". The delegation was composed of representatives of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Scotland, the English Free Churches and the Youth Work of the British Council of Churches. The chairman was the Bishop of Chichester.

The delegation reports "widespread cases of physical cruelty" towards the whites and after as "so acute that the authorities responsible may well consider whether it is not done by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, the U.S.S.R., Canada and other countries, that at least the minimum ration needs for some alleviation be made available for the German people, on a systematic and reliable long-term plan".

The report stresses the terrible housing conditions, "the bitterness" caused by the methods of denazification, and urges strongly that "while persons charged with crimes should be tried in a court and punished on conviction, and that those working Leaders and supporters should be removed from their posts, all such persons should be granted an amnesty". In further urges "the release of all prisoners of war, including those in the Middle East, by the end of 1947".

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There are summarised some of the principal recommendations of the report:

"That in view of the indispensable part which it plays in the discharge of British responsibilities in Germany, the Religious Affairs Branch should possess increased status and authority.

"That the Religious Affairs Branch be prepared to see whether obstacles and facilities for public worship exist in the different regions, and to make urgent

recommendations to the appropriate authorities for the repair or de-requistioning of buildings, institutions, etc. as may be necessary....

"That, in view of the long continued isolation of the Churches in Germany from contact with Churches abroad and also of the universities and teaching profession from similar contact, a regular system of visits to countries outside Germany, including Britain, be maintained, and extended as soon as possible; and that facilities be readily given for visits by British and other non-German lecturers, teachers, youth leaders and other representative persons, to the British Zone.

"That a strong effort be made to carry forward the process of re-education and to improve educational facilities in schools and universities; and that, as an indispensable part of this policy, the pre-Nazi law in respect of Confessional schools be fully implemented, as well as the pre-Nazi law, reinforced by the Allied decisions of November 23, 1945, on religious teaching in all non-confessional schools, in accordance with the wishes of the parents.

"That the Catholic 'Caritasverband' and the Evangelical 'Hilfswerk' be recognised as official receipients of relief from Britain...

"That the question of emigration facilities for expellees and displaced persons be urgently and sympathetically studied, and ecclesiastical authorities overseas be invited to co-operate..." E.P.S.Geneva

Declaration at the Mass Meeting of Christians at Hiroshima

On the occasion of the 53rd Annual Assembly of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America which was held at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., U.S.A., from January 14 to 17, 1947, the following "Declaration of a Mass Meeting of Christians" held at Hiroshima last summer was read, which has not yet been published. It reads:

"We, Christians who survived the disaster at Hiroshima, are gathered here in memory of our friends who were suddenly called away on this very day a year ago. We are standing in the ruins of a church building which was reduced to ashes, and in God's holy presence make the following declaration to the Christians of Japan and of the whole world:

We repent of our former way of life, which was utterly powerless to avert war and its horrors.

We re-affirm the teaching of Jesus that God is our Father and mankind His children, and that we are all brothers. We pray whole-heartedly that our faith may be restored and made faithful even unto death.

We are living now in a world of misery and suffering, we are destitute of food, clothing and habitation, but we believe the only way to surmount these difficult conditions lies in brotherly love towards our neighbours. We therefore pray for God's help in the faithful performance of this Christian duty.

We firmly believe that faith in Jesus' teaching and its practice is the true and unparalleled way of saving individuals and of reconstructing our native land, and thus we pledge ourselves to strive for the spread of this Gospel in word and deed.

Dear fellow-believers of Japan and of the whole world, we beseech you all to pray for us." E.P.S.Geneva

recommendations to the appropriate Allied-Italian for the repair or de-requisitioning of buildings, institutions, etc. as may be necessary....

"Last, in view of the long continued isolation of the Churches in Germany from contact with Churches abroad and also of the universities and teaching profession from similar contact, a regular system of visits to countries outside Germany, including Britain, be initiated, and extended as soon as possible and that facilities be readily given for visits by Britons and other non-Germans interested, therefore, with leaders and other representative persons, in the British Zone.

"That a strong effort be made to carry forward the process of re-education and to improve educational facilities in schools and universities and that, as an indispensable part of this policy, the pre-Nazi law in respect of Confessional schools be fully implemented, as well as the pre-Nazi law, reinforced by the Allied decisions of November 23, 1945, on religious teaching in all non-confessional schools, in accordance with the wishes of the parents.

"That the Obnoxiate 'Entnazifierungsbund' and the Evangelical 'Militarwerk' be recognized as official representatives of relief from within.

"That the question of adequate facilities for medicines and clothing be urgently and sympathetically studied, and ecclesiastical authorities overseas be invited to co-operate..." E.W.S.Dunn

The Arrival at the Town Hospital of Christians at Ilfeld

On the occasion of the first annual assembly of the International Missions Conference of North America which was held at Pine Hill Field, Pa., U.S.A., from January 14 to 17, 1946, "Christian Herald" printed the story of a Russian-speaking Christian and "Mark" the Christian that events are said, which has not yet been published. It reads:

"We, Christians who survived the disaster at Ilfeld, can relate here in memory of our friends who were suddenly called away on this very day a year ago. We are standing in the ruins of a church building which was reduced to ashes, and in Godly holy prayerful ends the following meditation in the Christians of Ilfeld and of the whole world:

"In respect of our Saviour may or life, which was utterly precious to every way and its service.

"We re-affirm the teaching of Jesus that God is our Father and receive His children, such as we are all brothers. We pray exclusively that our faith may be restored and made triumphant even unto death.

"We are living now in a world of misery and suffering, we are thousands of food, clothing and habitation, but we believe the only way to overcome these difficult conditions lies in bodily love towards our neighbours. We sincerely pray for God's help in the faithful performance of this Christian duty.

"Firmly believe when faith in Jesus' teaching and the promise in the true and unequivocal way of serving individually and of remembering our native land, and thus we plighe ourselves to strive for the praise of this God of in word and deed.

"Dear Fellow-Christians of Japan and of the world we ask, we beseech you all to pray for us."

E.W.S.Dunn

SCOTLAND

Churches Open to German Prisoners of War

Throughout Scotland there has been a move towards reconciliation with the prisoners of war still remaining in the country. Small groups of them have attended services, some of them giving help with the singing, and recently special services have been held for huge congregations in Glasgow Cathedral and in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. In Glasgow the preachers was the Rev. David H. C. Read, B.D., who was himself a prisoner of war in Germany for more than five years. In St. Giles' Cathderal, Edinburgh, 1,000 German prisoners of war attended a service which was conducted by ministers of various denominations. The congregation which also included some 300 members of the public was addressed by the Very Rev. Dr. Charles L. Warr, minister of St. Giles', the address being translated by the Rev. Dr. Heinz Golzen, formerly legal adviser of the German Confessional Church and now doing chaplaincy work with prisoners of war.

A scheme of hospitality for German prisoners of war has been arranged in St. Andrews through the Ministers' Council and is working well. Through this scheme hospitality is given to the prisoners individually, householders inviting one or two men to their homes one Sunday each month. The guests attend morning service with their hosts, and have dinner with the family before returning to camp.

E.P.S.Geneva

BELGIUM

Four Chaplains Leave for the Congo

On January 12, 1947, in Brussels four chaplains were consecrated before leaving for their work among the native tropps in the Belgian Congo. The ceremony had a really ecumenical character, because the four chaplains belonged to four different Churches: the "Silo", the Methodist Mission, the Belgian Mission and the Union of Churches. The chief chaplain, Van Goethem, took the chair at a very large meeting of members of all the Evangelical Churches in Brussels and the provinces, and the Ministers for National Defence and for the Colonies were also present.

Pastor Van Goethem in his address reminded the audience that "nothing great is accomplished without faith". He emphasised that the Congo is one of the colonies where missionaries have the greatest freedom of action. In 1918 a handful of Belgian Protestants accepted a challenge to their faith. They founded the Belgian Protestant Mission to the Congo. In 1934 the Salvation Army started from nothing; today it is a flourishing organisation. In 1936 the chief chaplain, Pierre Blommaert, organised a Reserve List for this Protestant Chaplaincy of the Public Force, and in 1940 the Rev. Coxhill took steps to make this Chaplaincy official. Finally in 1946, thanks to the support of the military authorities of the Colonial Government, it is possible to meet pressing appeals to send Protestant Belgian chaplains to the Congo, and thus to form an active chaplaincy.

"Our chaplains must consider themselves indispensable out there" said Pastor Van Goethem. This term may appear presumptuous, but in the Mastir's service they must always be ready to serve, in the conviction that the Congo needs them, no matter where or how... In Belgina the chaplains work in the service of the Churches; in the Congo they work under the Missions."

E.P.S.Geneva

SPAIN

The Protestant Church Goes on

A correspondent has just sent the following news to E.P.S. concerning the Protestant Church in Spain.

An Assembly of the Evangelical Church of Spain was held in Madrid. This enabled clergymen from different parts of the Peninsula to exchange their impress-

ions on the life of the Church and on mission work, which is waiting for the full accomplishment of its mission.

The Centenary of the Reformation was celebrated in the capital. It was a real fete in the Church.

Local efforts are being made to regain the vitality of the Church from the time when it enjoyed complete freedom, and when it could receive more help from Foreign Missions. This effort is marked both by joys and sorrows, as is witnessed by the present ministry of this pastor expressed in those lines:

"I have finished my first journey with its joys and sorrows - lives, histories, memories. Joys, because the word is confirmed which says, 'The sowing has not been made in vain'; it is growing more strongly. There is a magnificent hope for tomorrow, with God's help. Sorrows, because of the faces that are no longer seen but which have left us their example and their witness... Here and there the Church is present. There, where destruction has passed, there is still a faithful remnant. And now, as the Apostle Paul says, we see a great cloud of witnesses singing and praising God, filled with faith that God will bless them and continue to strengthen them." E.P.S.Geneva

ITALY

Obstacles to Protestant Broadcasts

The Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy, in a circular distributed to the Italian and foreign press, emphasises the ever-increasing obstacles to the broadcasting of Protestant services in Italy.

These broadcasts had never been authorised previously, but it was finally possible to arrange them thanks to the goodwill of the Allied Command, at the time of the fall of Fascism. But soon, without anyone knowing definitely whether the Protestant services were no longer allowed, obstacles of all kinds cropped up everywhere. Already in May 1945 an attempt was made to interrupt the broadcasts from Rome altogether. Then the times of the services in the different towns were continually being changed, without notice in advance. Finally, they became real abuses, always justified by unforeseen difficulties in organisation. Here is an example.

At Christmas the Moderator of the Waldensian Church in Italy went to the Studio in Rome at 8:45 a.m. to broadcast the service, as arranged. But the Studio employees had received instructions not to broadcast the Protestant service and to close down at 8:30 a.m. No justification nor official communication was given. But the suppression of the service evoked such an avalanche of protests by telephone, that the Studio was obliged to agree to have the service transmitted at 3:30 p.m.

The circular published by the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy ends by saying that these facts, which are obvious examples of an attack on freedom of conscience and of worship, are not worthy of a public service like the radio, which ought to be inspired by principles of unbiased justice and respect for all opinions. "The B.B.C. in London gave several broadcasts of the Pope's Christmas message. England also has its State religion, but that does not prevent the B.B.C. from respecting all opinions and all confessions." E.P.S.Geneva

NETHERLANDS

French Theologian Honour to the Queen

Queen Wilhelmine of Holland has received an Honorary Degree from the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Montpellier. The Dean of the Faculty went to The Hague

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to be received by the Queen. After recalling the different circumstances which had brought the Low Countries into contact with the Faculty of Montpelier before and during the war, Dean Leenhardt continued: "Every living Christian who tries, in faith, to illuminate the world by the divine Revelation, is a theolgian. We are writing books, your Majesty is writing the same thing: 'God must be made manifest, in order that His Kingdom may come'..." E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANY

Church and People, 1947

The "News Service of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland" (January 10, 1947) is publishing a series of sayings by leading Christian personalities in Germany relating to "Church and People, 1947".

The President of the Evangelical Church Council, Bishop Wurm, says: "For a long time clever people thought that the lack of reverence for God, the turning away from Jesus Christ, were of no significance. Today we see that it was wrong to think that morality would look after itself... Selfishness has become the only active motive. There can be no more urgent prayer than this: that God give our people a new heart and a new spirit..."

President Steltzer (Schleswig-Holstein) says: "We can well understand young Germans today wanting to look for a better existence outside in the world... But Germany cannot do without one of them! However uncertain our future is, it is certain that no young and healthy people will be unemployed here and that everyone whom we lose is making the way out of our misery longer and harder".

The Lord Mayor of Darmstadt, Ludwig Metzger, says: "The good which has actually been done does not excuse us for what has been left undone. The Church has taken refuge too much in 'spirituality' and forgotten its duty to the whole of life. It is only when our love is great enough to covery every sphere of life, that we shall succeed in building afresh".

Professor Gerhard Ritter (Freiburg) asks: "How can the Word of God become a force in public life?" First of all he wants "the restoration of the true unity of the Church, as seen at Barmen and Dehlem". The second thing is that "the evangelical message is preached to our people in such a way, that the people feel that it applies directly to their needs". The third wish is that the Evangelical convictions inspired by the Church should contribute towards the reconstruction of political life. E.P.S.Geneva

CHINA

"Those Who Sit in Darkness"

Stories of heroism, suffering and faith are coming from the records of the Institution for the Chinese Blind during the war years. The National Blind Welfare Association has moved its headquarters from Chungking to Shanghai where its office is in the Christian Literature Society Building. The Braille magazine is being transcribed by hand for distribution. During the year 1945 the 20 clinics for the treatment of eye diseases and the prevention of blindness report 244,240 treatments given and 5,745 operations performed. The number of schools for the blind and deaf receiving help from the National Blind Welfare Association has now reached 41. All are pleading for new Braille slates as the old supplies are worn out or have been destroyed through enemy action.

E.P.S.Geneva

Some Recent Appreciations of the Ecumenical Press Service

Mr. Harry N. Holmes, Assistant Secretary of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches (New York), writes: "I cannot tell you how much I appreciated your sending me those copies of the I.C.P.I.S. I should be glad if I could receive them regularly. There are so many thing that I can do better if I receive them regularly.."

The Rev. Cecil Northcott, Home Secretary of the London Missionary Society writes: "I like the new title and the whole set-up of the Ecumenical Press Service. Also the idea of having an article of a longer character at the back is a good one, and should be useful for editors to quote from".

Pastor Jean Becker, of Belfort (France) writes: "May I tell the editors of the News Sheet how much benefit we derive from it? The thing that strikes most the faithful to whom we quote important passages from these bulletins is the strong, sure and serene manner in which the Churches throughout the world are manifesting the same faith, have the same problems to solve and are seeking to re-discover their greatness through mission work today".

A Roman Catholic professor in Belgium writes: "This evening, January 17th, the evening before the week of prayer for the unity of Christendom, I am carefully preparing my course on this important question. And now in a brochure by Paul Couturier entitled "Rapprochement entre les chretiens au XXe siecle" I find a paragraph on the E.P.S. which fills me with joy and hope... Would there be any way of receiving your news-sheet in Belgium?"

Dr. Robbins W. Barstow, Director of the Church World Service (New York), writes: "The information which the Ecumenical Press Service provides for our general Christian constituency as to the total life of the Churches, including the relief and reconstruction aspects, is a very important part of the cultivation of generous response".

Dr. R. M. Hopkins, representative of the Disciples of Christ in Geneva: "With the addition of the World's Sunday School Association to the six other ecumenical organizations under whose auspices Ecumenical Press Service has been published, and the merging on January 1, 1947 by the International Missionary Council of its bulletins, E.P.S. is undergurded by the mosy comprehensive co-operation of any ecumenical project. It seems highly important that every religious publication in the world should receive this ecumenical press service."

Pastor K. Hutten, Director of the Evangelical Press Centre in Stuttgart: "Your News-Service goes all over the world. But you cannot easily imagine how valuable it is for us in a country which has been cut off from the world for many years by high, invisible walls. This News Sheet is a hand stretched out to us, which I take with gratitude every time it arrives..."

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Dr. Reginald H. Tupper, Director of the Church Health Service (New York), writes: "The information under the Ecumenical Press Service is very helpful for our general Christian reading as in the total life of the Churches. Including the relief and reconstruction aspects, is a very important part of the activation of Christian response".

Dr. E. L. Hawkins, representative of the Diocese of Chester in Geneva: "With the addition of the World's Student Christian Association to the all other ecumenical organizations under about complete Ecumenical Press Service has been published, and the meeting on January 1, 1947 by the International Missions Council of its building, E.P.I.S. is endorsed by the most comprehensive co-operation of any ecumenical project. It seems highly important that every religious publication in the world should receive this ecumenical press service."

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